

# Solar eclipse festivities in Mesa

By Alyssa Tufts - August 18, 2017



*MCC students demonstrating the use of eclipse glasses on Aug. 10 for a promotional video featuring MCC Astronomy Department faculty to promote safety techniques for viewing the eclipse. (Special to MyNewsMesa.com)*

A solar eclipse is not an event that happens often, and many people don't get the chance to see it in their lifetime, however, Mesa residents will have the unique opportunity of viewing the partial solar eclipse on Monday, Aug. 21. The eclipse will begin at approximately 9:13 a.m. and peak at about 10:33 a.m. Mesa has the following options to available to view the eclipse.

## **AZMNH 'Pre-Eclipse Party'**

If you want to enjoy festivities before the eclipse on Monday, the Arizona Museum of Natural History (AZMNH) in downtown Mesa is hosting a "Pre-Eclipse Party" on Saturday Aug. 19 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Scientists from the ASU School for the Future of Innovation in Society, and the ASU School of Earth and Space Exploration will assist in activities, crafts and presentations about exploring space and the upcoming solar eclipse. Attendees can learn about the latest NASA missions, make a pocket solar system and take home a pair of eclipse glasses to safely watch the solar eclipse (supplies limited). AZMNH is located at 53 N. Macdonald in downtown Mesa. The event is free with the price of admission: \$12 for adults, \$7 for children, and \$10 for seniors. For more information, visit [arizonamuseumofnaturalhistory.org](http://arizonamuseumofnaturalhistory.org).

## **MCC 'Solar Eclipse Viewing Parties'**

Mesa Community College (MCC) is hosting "Solar Eclipse Viewing Parties" on Aug 21 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Clocktower Courtyard on its main campus, 1833 W. Southern Ave., and the Red Mountain Campus, Saguaro Building Lobby, 7110 E. McKellips Road.

The viewing parties at both campuses will have activities, concessions and about 500 solar viewing glasses available on a first come, first serve basis. They are expecting between 500-800 people to attend.

In addition, the planetarium at Mesa Community College's main campus will be open as well and serves close to 5,000 guests every year and sets up monthly astronomy nights open to the public, said Dr. Melissa Bunte, residential faculty and discipline coordinator for the Astronomy Department at MCC.

"So, when there is a major astronomical event, like a solar or lunar eclipse, we try to open our doors and set up telescopes so everyone can see because it's something you wouldn't be able to do from home in most cases," Bunte said. "This is not unusual for us...the last time was for a total lunar eclipse a year and a half ago. So, this time we wanted to make sure since so many people in the U.S. are going to be able to see the total eclipse, that we should at least offer that opportunity for Mesa even though it's only a partial eclipse here for us."

From 9 a.m. to noon, Bunte said MCC will have educated astronomers on campus for the viewing parties who can answer questions about the eclipse, especially common misconceptions in addition to helping people be safe and giving them a way to see the eclipse.

"We're going to have a little activity about why eclipses are important, what major observations and scientific inferences we can make by watching an eclipse, what kinds of discoveries have been made through history and how it has affected cultures throughout time."

It's an awe-inspiring sight.... but most people don't get this opportunity at all in their lifetime, and there is not another total solar eclipse visible from Phoenix in at least 200 years.

For more information about the viewing parties at MCC, visit [Mesacc.edu](http://Mesacc.edu).

### **MPS' viewing of the eclipse**

According to an [article on Mesa Public Schools' website by Superintendent Dr. Michael Cowan](#), Mesa Public Schools will allow fourth- to 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students to view the eclipse so long as safety precautions are strictly enforced, eclipse glasses and pinhole projectors must be used according to safety standards and parents must be notified prior to any eclipse-viewing activities.

"At the start of the school day (Aug. 21) of the eclipse, in every Mesa Public Schools classroom from preschool to 12th grade, students should be reminded of the hazards associated with looking directly at the eclipse. Proper supervision is required for any students outside between 9 a.m. and noon, including students who must move between buildings or are dismissed during that time.

From 9 a.m. to noon, preschool to third-grade students will be on rainy day schedule. Outdoor activities for fourth- to 12th-grade students should be minimized or cancelled, if possible. If you have outdoor eclipse-related activities planned for fourth- to 12th-grade students, safety precautions must be strictly enforced. Appropriate accommodations must be provided for students wishing to not view the eclipse."

– Mesa resident [Alyssa Tufts](#) is a reporter for [MyNewsMesa.com](#).

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